

Gender and Personality Correlates Influence on Attitudes towards the Elderly in Indigenous  
People

Nakita-Rose Morrisseau

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**Table of Contents**

Abstract .....	5
Gender and Personality Correlates Influence on Attitudes towards the Elderly in Indigenous People.....	6
<b>Gender</b> and Attitudes Towards the Elderly .....	7
Cross-Cultural Perspective on Attitudes Towards the Elderly.....	7
Aboriginal ancestry and attitudes towards the Elderly.....	8
Personality Profiles and Attitudes Towards the Elderly .....	9
Present Study .....	9
Purpose .....	9
Methods.....	10
Participants .....	10
Procedure .....	10
Participants .....	10
Measures.....	11
Kogan's attitudes towards old people scale.....	11
Cattell's 16 Personality Factor .....	12
Results.....	12
General Attitudes Towards the Elderly .....	12
Gender Differences in Indigenous Attitudes towards the Elderly.....	13

Step-wise Multiple regression of 16 PF factors and Kogan's Total Scores.....	13
Kogan's Total and 16 PF correlations.....	13
Discussion.....	14
References.....	17

### **Abstract**

Previous literature indicates that there are cultural differences in attitudes towards the elderly; however there are very few if any that examine Indigenous peoples of Canada's attitudes towards the elderly. The current study aims to understand the influence of gender and personality factors on attitudes towards the elderly. The Kogan's attitude towards old people scale and Cattell's 16 Personality Factor measures were used. Results indicated that Indigenous people have positive attitudes towards the elderly. There was no significant difference between genders. Low tension was the only predictive factor for positive attitudes towards the elderly; and vigilance was the only correlated variable with Kogan negative valance items.

*Keywords:* Indigenous, attitudes, elderly, age, personality

*Gender and Personality Correlates Influence on Attitudes towards the Elderly in Indigenous People*

Previous literature has indicated that gender has an influence on attitudes towards the elderly, with females holding more positive attitudes (Allan & Johnson, 2008; Randler, Wilhelm, Flessner & Hummel, 2014). A relationship between personality traits and attitudes towards the elderly has also been implicated (Mansfield-Green, Morrisseau, Caswell, & Valliant, submitted manuscript; Thorson & Perkins, 1980). There have been previous research examining cross-cultural comparisons in attitudes towards the elderly (All & Terms, 2014; Gullahorn, 1957; McGrath, 2007), however, there have been no studies to the current study's knowledge that examine Indigenous people's attitudes towards the elderly. It is important to understand attitudes towards the elderly as attitudes can influence thoughts, feelings and behaviours (Lee, 2009). Understanding attitudes can help to promote positive attitudes towards the elderly, which in turn will reduce stigma towards the elderly and increase quality of care.

The population of Elderly people in Canada is rapidly increasing as a result of the baby boomers (Edwards & Aldous, 1996; Lanting, Crossley, & Morgan, 2011). According to Statistics Canada, the population of seniors (65 and Older) in 2011 makes up 14.4% of the population (Statistics Canada, 2011). This statistics has been rapidly increasing by 1-2 plus% every ten years since 1971 (Statistics Canada, 2011). It is projected that by 2031 the elderly population will make up 22.8% of the population and by 2061 will consist of 25.5% of the population (Statistics Canada, 2011). These rapidly increasing statistics are significant due to the lack of resources currently in place for elderly peoples in Canada (McKinlay & Cowan, 2003; Wade, 1999).

Aboriginal Peoples of Canada currently represent 4.3% of the population, and is rapidly increasing (Lanting, Crossley, Morgan, & Cammer, 2011; Wilson, Rosenberg, & Abonyi, 2011). Further, 1.3% of the Aboriginal population is considered Elderly (Statistics Canada, 2011). There are significant lack of social, health and economic resources in many Aboriginal communities (McGrath, 2007). With elder care being given the least amount of funding (Wilson, Rosenberg, & Abonyi, 2011).

#### *Gender and Attitudes Towards the Elderly*

In the literature gender has consistently been found to influence attitudes towards the elderly. A study done by Allan and Johnson, found that females tend to have more positive attitudes than males (2009). Randler and colleagues, found using the Kogan's attitudes towards old people scale that females tend to have more positive attitudes than males (2014). Speculation was made that gender socialization could be contributing to the previous results. Females tend to be socialized to have compassion, and attentive to caregiving roles compared to males (McKinlay & Cowan, 2003; Ryan, Melby, & Mitchell, 2007). Females also tend to report more desire to participate in professions that care for the elderly (Soderhamn, Lindencrona, & Gustavsson, 2011). Additionally, geriatric professions tend to be more heavily populated with females (McKinlay & Cowan, 2003). Based on previous literature it is expected that gender will have an influence on indigenous peoples' attitudes towards the elderly.

#### *Cross-Cultural Perspective on Attitudes Towards the Elderly*

Runkawatt, Gustafsson, and Engstrong, found using the Kogan's attitudes towards old people scale that Swedish students tend to have more positive attitudes compared to Thai peers. (2013). It was also found in a cross-cultural study of attitudes towards the elderly comparing Caucasian, Chinese, Filipino, Portuguese, Polynesian, Japanese, and Hispanic that ethnicity had

an influence on attitudes towards the elderly according the Kogan's attitudes towards old people scale (All & Terms, 2014). Significant differences were found between Caucasian, Chinese, and Pilipino. Caucasians tend to have more positive attitudes towards the elderly (All & Terms, 2014). Cross-cultural comparisons of attitudes towards the elderly are important because a culture gives insight into shared values, and the common experience of the people (Chi, 2011). The literature indicates that there are cultural differences in attitudes towards the elderly, however the attitudes of Indigenous people towards the elderly have yet to be addressed in the literature.

#### *Aboriginal ancestry and attitudes towards the Elderly*

Currently there is limited information in the literature that focuses on Aboriginal peoples' attitudes towards the elderly. Jervis, Boland, and Fickenschner wanted to measure response to burden and satisfaction among Aboriginal caregivers. They found that caregivers respond low on burden and high on satisfaction (2010). This study provides insight into the attitudes of Indigenous peoples towards the elderly, however it does not measure attitude as a construct. Through qualitative interviews common themes were observed by Jervis, Boland, and Fickenschner. They found that traditional value and belief system instilled from childhood promotes respect for the Elderly (2010). This study provides insight into positive attitudes towards the elderly among Indigenous people. It can be inferred that Indigenous people will have positive attitudes towards the elderly because of the traditional value the elderly have in the culture.



*Personality Profiles and Attitudes Towards the Elderly*

Attitudes can be thought of as the expression of personality structures (Eysenck, 1961). Thorson and Perkins wanted to examine the relationship between personality and attitudes towards the elderly. They used the Kogan's attitudes towards old people scale, and the Edwards Personal Preference Schedule to examine the correlation between attitudes towards the elderly and personality traits. They found that attitudes towards the elderly were positively correlated with nurturance and endurance. Attitudes towards the elderly were negatively correlated with aggression. Thus suggesting that there is a relationship between personality and attitudes (1980).

Mansfield-Green and colleagues sought to examine undergraduate students' attitudes towards the elderly, and personality correlates. To address this, the Kogan's attitudes towards old people scale and Cattell's 16 PF was used. Results indicated that Factor A (Warmth), Factor C (Emotional Stability), Factor G (Rule-Consciousness) and Factor Q4 (Tension) were predictive factors for positive attitudes towards the elderly. A significant difference was obtained where females had more positive attitudes than males. Further suggesting that there is a relationship between attitudes towards the elderly and personality traits.

**Present Study***Purpose*

The current study aims to understand Indigenous peoples attitudes towards the elderly, and the influence of gender and personality traits. The current study hypothesizes that indigenous people will have positive attitudes towards the elderly (Jervis, Boland, & Fickenschner, 2010). Based on research done by Allan and Johnson (2009) it is hypothesized that females will have more positive attitudes than males. It is expected that Factor A (Warmth),

Factor C (Emotional Stability) and Factor Q4 (tension) will be predictive factors for positive attitudes towards the elderly, consistent with Mansfield-Green et al., submitted manuscript.

## **Methods**

### *Participants*

Those identifying as Indigenous people (Status, Non-status, Métis, and Inuit) were recruited for the study (n=60). Both males (n=13) and females (n=47) were recruited for the study. Participants were to be between the ages of 18-55 years (M=33.78). Participants must identify from Indigenous ancestry to participate in the study. Participants were recruited from various agencies and community centres located on First Nation reserves. Participation was strictly voluntary. Completion of the questionnaire package took approximately 1.5 hours. The study was approved by ethics.

## **Procedure**

### *Participants*

Participants were given a questionnaire package that contained consent forms, a demographics sheet, the Kogan's attitudes towards old people scale, the 16 PF testing booklet and the corresponding bubble sheet. Participants were then guided to complete the demographics questionnaire and Kogan's attitudes towards old people scale directly on the page. Participants were informed to answer the Cattell's 16 PF questions on the corresponding bubble sheet. They were instructed to answer the questions while trying to avoid the "I don't know" or "?" option.

## Measures

### *Demographics Form*

A three page demographics questionnaire containing general questions relating to ethnicity, age, gender, contact with the elderly and social roles of the elderly and past and current attitudes towards the elderly.

### *Kogan's attitudes towards old people scale*

The Kogan's attitudes towards old people scale holds 34 items on a likert scale ranging from strongly agree (1) to strongly disagree (6). There are 17 paired statements consisting of one positive (even numbered statements) and one negative (negative numbered statements). For example, when addressing elderly individual's capability to change the positive statement is "Most elderly people are capable of new adjustments when the situation demands it" and the negative paired statement being "Most elderly people get set in their ways and are unable to change".

To obtain scores for the Kogan's attitudes towards old people scale, odd numbered items were reversed scored. Each individual item's value was tallied to create the Kogan's Total. Kogan's Total can range from 34-204 and scores over 120 indicate positive attitudes towards the elderly.

Kogan's attitudes towards old people scale measures negative and positive attitudes towards the elderly that are reflected by common stereotypes surrounding personal hygiene and appearance, cognitive capabilities, personality traits and comfort with the elderly (Ryan, Melby, & Mitchell, 2007). The Kogan's is a reliable and valid measured, used consistently in the

literature. The measure has produced a reliability coefficient ranging from 0.66 to 0.85 and interscale item correlations ranging from 0.46 to 0.52 (Kogan, 1961a).

### *Cattell's 16 Personality Factor*

Personality correlates was measured by Cattell's 16 Personality Factor Scale (16 PF, Cattell, Cattell, 1993). This measure produces personality factors on a bipolar scale from one to ten. The scores are computed from raw scores that are converted into sten scores. The sten scores are the number that indicates where the individual falls on bipolar scale. The measure consists of true/false questions, reasoning and 3-point preference items. There are 16 factors that are address in the measure (i.e., Warmth, Reasoning, Emotional Stability, Dominance, Liveliness, Rule-Consciousness, Social Boldness, Sensitivity, Vigilance, Abstractedness, Privateness, Apprehension, Openness to Change, Self-Reliance, Perfectionism, and Tension). With each factor the participant falls on any point (one to ten) on the bipolar scale which indicates how much or how little they can be characterized by the personality factor. Example: Factor A is Warmth. Someone who is low in warmth is described as someone who is impersonal, distant, reserved or detached, someone who is high in this factor may be described as outgoing, attentive to others, kindly and easy going (Cattell, R.B., Cattell, A.k., & Cattell, H.E.P., 1993). The 16 PF is a valid and reliable measure with alpha coefficients ranging from 0.69 to 0.87 (IPAT, 2009).

## **Results**

### *General Attitudes Towards the Elderly*

Overall, the current sample of indigenous people (n=60) tended to have positive attitudes towards the elderly with mean of the Kogan's total being 140.65. Kogan's total scores over the

sum of 120 indicate positive attitudes towards the elderly (Kogan, 1961). See table 1 for means and standard deviations for Kogan Total scores (negative, positive and total valance items) and 16 PF personality factors.

#### *Gender Differences in Indigenous Attitudes towards the Elderly*

An independent t-test was ran to see if there were differences between males and females in attitudes towards the elderly. It was found that males ( $M=140.08$ ,  $SE=5.34$ ) and females ( $M=141.31$ ,  $SE=1.93$ ) do not significantly differ in attitudes towards the elderly  $t(55)=-.268, p>.05$ ,  $r=0.04$ ; however it did represent a small effect size.

#### *Step-wise Multiple regression of 16 PF factors and Kogan's Total Scores*

A step-wise multiple regression was computed to comprehend if personality factors significantly predicted positive attitudes towards the elderly. Stepwise variable revealed a significant model  $f(3,47) = 2.68$ ,  $p<.05$  with an adjusted  $R^2 = .09$ , with low tension as a single predictor variable  $\beta = -.32$ ,  $p<.05$  (See table 2). Durbin-Watson statistic which was found to be within the generally accepted range (1.59).

#### *Kogan's Total and 16 PF correlations*

A correlation matrix was examined for relationships between Kogan's total and 16 PF factors. Pearson correlation was conducted to see if the relationship's fit a linear model. A significant correlation was found with factor Q4 (tension)  $r = -.28$ ,  $p < .05$  (see Table 3).

Negative valance items on the Kogan's attitudes toward old people scale and the responses on the 16 PF produced a significant correlation with Factor L (vigilance)  $r = -.30$ ,  $p < .05$  (See table 4).

## Discussion

The current study sought to understand indigenous people of Canada's attitudes towards the elderly, and the influence of gender and personality traits on attitudes towards the elderly. It was hypothesized that indigenous people will have positive attitudes towards the elderly, and that females will hold more positive attitudes towards the seniors. It was expected that factor A (warmth), factor C (emotional stability) and factor Q4 (tension) will be predictive factors for positive attitudes.

Results indicated that indigenous people hold positive attitudes towards the elderly (Kogan total = 140.65). The results were congruent with research done by Jervis, Boland & Fickenscher (2010) where they examined caregivers among Aboriginal communities. The current study adds to the research previously conducted as it measures attitudes as a construct. From the results of the current study we can make inferences that Indigenous people tend to have positive attitudes towards the elderly.

Previous literature indicates that gender differences are present in attitudes towards the elderly, with females holding more positive attitudes (Allan & Johnson, 2008; Mansfield et al., submitted manuscript; Randler, Wilhelm, Flessner, & Hummel, 2014). The current study did not find similar results. The previous literature examining gender differences in attitudes towards the elderly did not examine indigenous people of Canada. The culture perspective Indigenous people hold are unique and currently still deep rooted in traditional beliefs, despite the effects of colonialism (Brown & Vercoe, 2006). The cultural perspective of Indigenous peoples hold a positive regard for the elderly, regardless of gender. The elderly in Indigenous communities have a significant role as advisors (Jervis, Boland, & Fickenscher, 2010). Indigenous people

have respect for the elderly as a traditional value, and this is taught to children and is a value that transcends to adulthood. The elderly are viewed to have wisdom, and often share wisdom to others as it is part of the oral tradition in indigenous cultures (Jervis, Boland, & Fickenscher, 2010). This could explain the results of the current study.

Previous literature has indicated that there is a relationship between attitudes towards the elderly and personality correlates (Mansfield-Green et al., submitted manuscript; Thorson & Perkins, 1980). The current study found that low tension was the only predictive variable with the overall Kogan's total score which is consistent with previous research conducted by Mansfield-Green et al., submitted manuscript. Those who are low on the tension scale are described as individuals who are relaxed, tranquil and patient (Cattell, R. B., Cattell, A.k., & Cattell, H.E.P., 1993). These individual may have more of the qualities that allow them to more compatible with the high demands working with the elderly. Factor L (Vigilance) was also negatively correlated with Kogan negative valance items. Those who score high on vigilance are described as individuals who are distrustful, skeptical and oppositional (Cattell, R. B., Cattell, A.k., & Cattell, H.E.P., 1993). It is likely that those who score high on vigilance do not have the adequate appreciation for societal rules based on the quality of being oppositional; and therefore do not appreciate the social role of the elderly in the community as other members do.

Although it was hypothesized that factor A (Warmth) and factor C (Emotional Stability) would be significantly correlated with positive attitudes towards the elderly, the current study did not yield such results. It should be considered that Cattell's 16 PF was normed on 22, 500 individuals, and of this number only 2.3% represented those of Indigenous people (Cattell, R. B., Cattell, A.k., & Cattell, H.E.P., 1993). There could be a cultural bias in the measure itself. With

only 2.3% being normed on Indigenous people the measure is not representative of Indigenous people, and significant results were not obtained.

It is important to understand the attitudes of individuals towards the elderly because their attitudes can contribute to behaviours and thoughts (Lee, 2009). Further, attitudes can influence the quality of care that the elderly are receiving. The results of the current study can be used to implement cultural integration programs to promote positive attitudes to a more general population. Results of the current study can also be beneficial in choosing which individuals are best suited to receive employment in geriatric professions.

The absence of a cultural entrenchment measure was a limitation of the current study. Without the information from the cultural entrenchment measure the current study was not able to measure culture as a construct.

Future studies should consider including a cultural entrenchment measure to address the relationship between cultural influence and attitudes towards the elderly, as a limitation of the current study is that one was not used. It would be of interest to examine the differences between urbanized indigenous peoples and those residing on Indigenous reserve in terms of the influence of cultural entrenchment and attitudes towards the elderly.



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**Table 1**

Variables	Total Sample (n=60)		Women (n=47)		Men (n=13)	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
KOGAN OPS						
Total	140.67	14.03	141.31	12.95	140.66	14.03
Positive	68.15	7.81	68.20	7.36	68.15	7.81
Negative	72.50	10.70	73.11	10.78	72.51	10.70
16PF (Factor)						
Warmth (A)	4.67	1.45	4.92	1.38	4.67	1.45
Reasoning (B)	4.00	1.81	4.10	1.93	3.98	1.81
Emotional Stability (C)	4.52	1.41	4.62	1.28	4.52	1.41
Dominance (E)	4.60	1.46	4.48	1.41	4.60	1.45
Liveliness (F)	5.33	1.42	5.35	1.25	5.33	1.42
Rule-Consciousness (G)	5.35	1.60	5.50	1.63	5.35	1.57
Social Boldness (H)	4.89	1.73	4.80	1.87	4.86	1.73
Sensitivity (I)	4.83	1.53	4.72	1.65	4.83	1.53
Vigilance (L)	6.25	1.97	5.80	1.94	6.25	1.97
Abstractedness (M)	5.65	1.31	5.62	1.27	5.65	1.31
Privateness (Factor N)	5.66	1.41	5.45	1.43	5.65	1.41
Apprehensive (O)	5.38	1.76	5.60	1.89	5.38	1.76

Table 2

16 PF Step-wise Personality Predictors for Positive Attitudes towards the elderly.

	<i><b>B</b></i>	<i><b>SE B</b></i>
(Constant)	161.2	11.49
Factor A	1.12	1.30
Factor G	-2.13	1.22
Factor Q4	-2.61	1.13

**Table 3**

*Bivariate Correlations (Pearsons's) of Kogan Total Items by 16PF Factor*

Variables	Kogan's Total	Warmth	Emotional Stability	Tension
Kogan's Total	---	.11	.09	-.29 *
Warmth	.11	---	.04	-.02
Emotional Stability	.09	.04	---	-.46*
Tension	-.29 *	-.20	-.46*	---

\* $p < .05$ , two-tailed. \*\* $p < .01$ , two-tailed. --- indicates a correlation coefficient of 1.0.

**Table 4***Bivariate Correlations (Pearsons's) of Kogan Negative Valence Subscale Items by 16PF Factor*

Variables	Kogan's NEG	Impression Management	Vigilance	Dominance
Kogan's Neg.	---	.11	-.30 *	-.05
Impression Management	.11	---	-.32 *	-.03
Vigilance	-.30 *	-.32 *	---	.23
Dominance	-.05	-.03	.23	---

\* $p < .05$ , two-tailed. \*\* $p < .01$ , two-tailed. --- indicates a correlation coefficient of 1.0.